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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

June 5, 2018

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Chris Hladick
Region 10 Administrator
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 6th Ave.
Mail Code: RA-210
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Hladick:

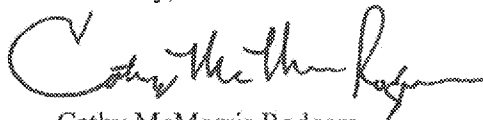
I am writing to you on behalf of the people of Spokane, Washington. Spokane is challenged by new Water Quality Standards for Protecting Human Health established by Environmental Protection Agency in late 2016, after the agency disapproved standards developed by Washington state. The new Water Quality standards include a numeric limit of 7 parts per quadrillion (ppq) for Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)—a standard that is unachievable with current technology, not reliably measured, and brings unpredictable costs to the city and the people who live there. This community needs a path forward on this issue that is affordable, measurable, and provides certainty.

The people of Spokane have made significant investments to meet Clean Water Act requirements, and is currently spending \$340 million to improve the health of the Spokane River. This work is reducing pollutants, including PCBs, going into the river and meet obligations for metals, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient loading. To pay for the work, the City sold \$200 million in revenue bonds with payments continuing through 2034. This investment is being made in a City with a 2016 median household income (MHI) of \$45,676, considerably lower than the MHI for the U.S. or Washington state.

Spokane clearly is a community that's doing the right things for its river. The City's Clean Water work has received national recognition, with the National Association of Clean Water Agencies granting Spokane the 2015 National Environmental Achievement Local Public Service Award.

40 C.F.R. 131.14 appears to provide for Water Quality Standards Variances in circumstances such as these. Please provide an overview of the variance requirements, process and expectations that will assist the City of Spokane and the State of Washington in developing a resulting variance to submit to EPA.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

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cc: Scott Pruitt, Administrator, EPA
David Condon, Mayor, City of Spokane
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell